

O'Brien Block — 121 W. First St.  
Oswego  
Oswego County  
New York

HABS No. NY-244 D

HABS  
NY,  
3rd Floor,  
2D-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
NY  
38-OSWE,  
2D-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

O'BRIEN 121 WEST FIRST STREET

Location: 121 West First Street East side of First Street  
between Seneca and Cayuga, Oswego, New York.

Present Owner: Neal O'Brien Lumber Company, Inc.

Present Occupant: The building currently vacant

Present Use: After the Neal O'Brien Lumber Company moved to  
its new quarters in 1970, the building has been  
rented, primarily for storage, the most recent  
tenant being the local Agway store.

Statement of  
Significance: This building, part of the block between Cayuga  
and Seneca, was in the heart of the pre-Civil War  
business district in Oswego. The remaining build-  
ings in the block comprise the last commercial  
buildings of the pre-Civil War era in Oswego  
(with the exception of the Stone and Willett store  
which is on the National Register of Historic  
Places).

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1846-47. Information taken from the  
tax assessment rolls would indicate that the construc-  
tion of the building probably took place at about this  
time. Eliza Huganin mortgaged her property to a James  
McCue in 1846 to secure \$700. The assessed valuation  
jumps from \$900 in 1845 to \$2,000 by 1847. It would  
seem, therefore, that a building might have been erected  
at this time.
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners:

This building is located on parts of lot 8 & 9, block  
17. The property was originally willed to Eliza  
Huganin with affection by Daniel Huganin, Sr., her  
father in 1824. Eliza mortgaged the property in 1835  
to Thomas Bond and John Cooley, finally foreclosing  
the mortgage in 1841. Bond and Cooley may well have  
built on the property, but it is virtually impossible  
to tell if this building was merely improved in 1846,  
or a whole new building erected. As stated above, the  
latter is probably the case.

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- 1846 Mortgage dated 8/6/1846 and recorded in Book W of Mortgages, page 359, Eliza Huganin mortgages property to James McCue to secure \$700.
- 1867 Assignment dated 8/12/1867 recorded in Book 103 of Mortgages, page 161 - James McCue assigns mortgage to Luther Wright.
- 1873 Last will and testament of Eliza Huganin authorizes executor to sell real estate to pay off her bequests.
- 1875 Auction sale on 2/10/1875 and recorded in Book 112 of Mortgages, page 86 shows property purchased by Abraham and Henry Freundlich, consideration \$3,331.51 .
- 1896 Last will of Henry Freundlich probated 11/9/96 and recorded 7/21/1902 leaves use of his half of property to his wife and then to his children.
- 1902 Warranty Deed dated 7/19/1902 and recorded in Book of Deeds 241, pages 167 and 168 conveys both halves to the Oswego Tool Company. A Quit-Claim Deed dated 12/28/1895 and recorded 8/4/1902 in Book 241 of Deeds, page 168 shows the property conveyed by the Board of Supervisors to Oswego Tool Company, consideration \$127.60 .
- 1926 Warranty Deed dated and recorded 4/23/1926 in Book 343 of Deeds, page 436, conveys with other land property to William G. O'Brien.
- 1927 Covenant vs. Grantor Deed dated 8/25/1927 and recorded 11/14/1927 in Book 351 of Deeds, page 388 conveys title to Neal O'Brien Lumber Company.

B. Historical events and persons connected with the structure:

While Eliza Huganin was not a public figure in the period from 1830 until her death, her brothers were extremely active in the community and had been since the family arrived in Oswego in 1905. Daniel, Jr. built the first frame store in Oswego somewhere on the east side of this block; the family owned two vessels; all the Huganin men were active in the War of 1812. All became involved in the government of the growing community holding various positions, and Daniel, Jr. was eventually elected to Congress. Eliza never married.

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After Eliza's death in 1873, the property was sold at auction to Abraham and Henry Freundlich who operated a clothing manufacturing company for many years. In 1902 the property was purchased (apparently for back taxes) by the Oswego Tool Company and was used for the manufacture of tools and machinery until 1926 when it was purchased by Wm. G. O'Brien and subsequently used to house the Neal O'Brien Lumber Company.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

Churchill, John C., LL.D. Landmarks of Oswego County  
D. Mason & Company, Publishers 1895.

Finn, Leo Old Shipping Days in Oswego  
Oswego County Board of Supervisors 1972

City Directories

Tax Assessment Records

County Deed and Mortgage Records

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